

FLOWER GARDEN BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWS - DECEMBER 2006

The Sanctuary Advisory Council (Council) was created in the fall of 2005. The new Council consists of 19 members (including alternates) who represent a variety of local interests and stakeholders. Since the inaugural meeting on November 9, 2005, the Council has held several additional public meetings.

The Council has had little time to settle into their seats! Almost immediately, the Council members began work on the sanctuary draft goals and objectives statements. The Council made their final recommendations for the goals and objectives at the June 14, 2006 Council meeting. This draft is included in the FGBNMS State of the Sanctuary Report.

The release of the State of the Sanctuary Report kicks-off the public scoping meetings for the management plan review. Dedicated Council members worked diligently to promote the October 2006 scoping meetings and a number of Council members also helped the FGBNMS conduct the meetings.

At the most recent Council meeting, members voted to create two working groups on Education and Oil and Gas production. These working groups will serve as invaluable advisors to the Council, the sanctuary staff and the sanctuary superintendent.

Even at this early stage, the Council has shown that they will be an important voice for their constituents. They are laying a solid foundation for the work that awaits during the management plan review process.